



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report of the Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Ambassador Werner Wnendt

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 1, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much, Ambassador Wnendt, for updating us here in the Permanent Council on political developments in Kosovo as well as on the activities of the OSCE's largest field Mission.

The question of the future status of Kosovo, and how our organization can best support implementation of the status settlement, should be one of our highest priorities for the organization in 2007. As we mentioned in our discussion last week with UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisari, the United States believes firmly that the status process is now entering its concluding phase. We are convinced that Mr. Ahtisari has crafted an excellent proposal that is fair and balanced. It is important that both sides engage constructively with President Ahtisari over the coming weeks on his proposal, which is based on a year of intensive negotiations. The people of Kosovo and of the region deserve clarity about the future of Kosovo and we support President Ahtisari's plan to present his proposal to the UN Security Council at the end of this month.

Following status, our OSCE Mission in Kosovo should review its presence in light of changing circumstances on the ground and possibly new areas of responsibility. Due to OMiK's extensive field presence, our Mission will likely play a key role in helping to monitor and report on the implementation of the status settlement. Under your leadership, Ambassador Wnendt, and with the support of all the participating States, the Mission has already restructured itself to act as the international community's eyes and ears in the field by establishing teams in each of Kosovo's municipalities.

At the same time, we also anticipate the Mission will perform many of the same institution-building activities that have characterized its mandate for the past eight years.

Refocusing the Mission's capacities, therefore, does not necessarily mean we will need to increase staffing. A top-down review should be conducted as the future mandate of the OSCE in Kosovo becomes clearer.

Finally, we would like to note that the vacancy rate for the 66 international municipal monitoring positions in the municipal teams still exceeds 30 percent. We owe it to the Mission to second the kind of experienced and capable international staff that it needs. The United States is doing its

part, seconding 33 professionals to OMiK—and I might add paying them an attractive salary as well. In total, our extra-budgetary commitment to help your mission better function amounts to nearly 2.2 million US dollars per year. We encourage other participating States to demonstrate a similar commitment, and as we go through the transition, I think it is especially important that countries remain as committed to the OSCE Mission even as they attempt to staff new structures and new operations that may be put in place in Kosovo.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.